Advocacy Talking Points/Email

FINAL: March 10, 2021

Draft Email

Subject: New Choices: Proven program meets surge in demand

Dear [Senator / Rep. NAME],

I would like to thank you for supporting New Choices / New Options program in the 2020/2021 budget. The funding allows us to continue to serve our clients during a time when workforce development is needed more than ever. Shortly after the shutdown due to COVID, we quickly pivoted to offer virtual and remote programs, and we are now receiving more inquiries than we ever have. **We have seen demand for the New Choices / New Options program increase by 32%** over the same period last year. This is a direct result from the surge in unemployment, particularly among our target population of women, minorities, justice-involved individuals, and mature workers who were expected to be nearing retirement.

**New Choices / New Options**, run by Pennsylvania Women Work, has a successful track record of placing 82% of the hardest-to-employ populations in long-term, family-sustaining jobs. Pennsylvania Women Work has the experience and track record to meet the increased demand, but we need support. Doesn’t it make sense for the state to continue to **invest** in a program that has maintained a **3-to-1 return on its investment *for 28 years***?

Governor Wolf included $750,000 in funding for New Choices/New Options in the Administration’s proposed budget. As a [board member/staff/client] for PA Women Work [and your constituent], I ask you to vigorously support maintaining $750,000 line item for the New Choices / New Options program in the 2021/2022 Labor and Industry budget.

I have attached an overview of the program for your review. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[NAME]

[INCLUDE HOME ADDRESS]

Phone Calls

**Intro**

* I live and work in your district (explain how you are connected to the legislator). Explain how you are connected to PA Women Work (I am a board, CAC member, staff, volunteer, etc.).
* Thank you for supporting the New Choices / New Options program in last year’s budget. I urge you to vigorously support maintaining the $750,000 line item for the New Choices / New Options program in the 2021/2022 Labor and Industry budget.
* Governor Wolf included this line item in his budget proposal.

**Overview and COVID-19 Impacts**

* COVID-19 has caused massive unemployment, impacting approximately 3 million people in PA.
* The DOL says that women represent nearly 60 percent of job layoffs.
* A higher percentage of women work in industries hardest hit by the COVID-19 crisis. This includes jobs in retail, hospitality, and professional and business sectors.
* Shortly after the shutdown due to COVID, we quickly pivoted to offer virtual and remote programs, and we are now receiving more inquiries than we ever have.
* We have been able to expand our geographical reach and also developed a partnership with YWCA to reach even more constituents.
* **We have seen demand for the New Choices / New Options program increase by 32%** over the same period last year.
* Over the past year, we served more than 1,400 clients.

**Why New Choices is critical for economic recovery**

* As the impact from COVID-19 continues, mass numbers of Pennsylvanians are going to need support finding employment.
* Funding for New Choices / New Options, is an **INVESTMENT** in the recovery of our economy. Our program transforms graduates into working citizens. New Choices / New Options has maintained a 3-to-1 return on investment for 27 years.
* For nearly three decades, New Choices / New Options has helped more than 68,000 Pennsylvanians find employment that pays a family-sustaining wage.

**Conclusion**

* We need your support to keep this critical program funded.
* As we move past this crisis, New Choices / New Options is vital to helping our economy recover.
* Please support the New Choices / New Options line item in the budget to get Pennsylvanians back to work.